REFORMATION TODAY '87

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Psalm 110

A Messianic psalm

1 THE LORD said to my lord:
"Sit down at my right hand,
Until I put beneath your feet
Your foes throughout the land."
The LORD from Zion's throne
Confers your sovereign power;
Now take your rule by his decree
And all your foes shall cower.

2 Your subjects make themselves
An offering free and glad
The day you lead them forth to war
In holy garments clad.
As morning's fertile womb
Brings cool, refreshing dew,
Your youth shall flow in all its strength,
Untiring, ever new.

3 The LORD affirms an oath,
His solemn, fixed decree:
"Like King Melchizedek, a priest
For ever shall you be."
On God's command he acts:
His day of wrath comes near
When he will crush rebellious kings
And end their proud career.

4 His judgment will descend
Upon the nations soon,
The bodies of their royal dead
Across the earth be strewn.
By water from the stream
His strength shall be restored;
So he will hold his head aloft,
The conqueror and the lord.

Front cover – *David and Barbara Ellis, formerly of Montpellier and Colmar, with Karen (14) and Philippe (16). The induction service at Cuckfield is planned for May 16th at 3.00 p.m. The speakers: Paul Appere of France and the editor. Considerable building activities have been in progress at Cuckfield in preparation for the commencement of David's ministry there.*

Editorial

Modern Prophecy and the 'Titanic'

The report of the 'Charismatic' conference is published in order that future generations will be able to understand the history of the evangelical constituency in England during the 1980s.

Many of our overseas readers will need to be reminded of the fact that during the 1980s there have been those who have used the name of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones to support their claim that the ideal for the Church is for the marriage of the Reformed Faith with the Charismatic beliefs of the baptism of the Spirit, and the continuation of supernatural and miraculous gifts (see page 26).

It is contended in addition that there needs to be a liberation from the old dead forms of worship. This subject has been presented in *RT* before. We have much sympathy with the call for contemporaneity. John Blanchard asserted that need boldly at the Carey Conference (see synopses of the papers). However, we would never under any circumstances claim that being contemporary in worship is going to bring the power of the Spirit. In fact, if being contemporary produces lightness, frivolity, shallowness, a reduced biblical content in worship, or irreverence, then the very opposite will occur. It will do more harm than good. We wish to be contemporary because that is our culture and because we find it easier to to evangelise that way. We should be flexible and allow freedom for Christians to use that form of speech which they find comfortable, while the shape and content of public worship is a matter for each congregation to sort out in the light of Scripture.

The report is not published to criticise or censure those who attended. Anthony Coppin himself went to the conference as a seeker. More than ever ministers are experiencing discouragement, disappointment, frustration, disillusionment. These are barren times. Secularism reigns. The churches seem irrelevant. Congregations are often fickle. Often they lack stamina. If there are few visible results a spirit of discontent can sprea . Murmuring can easily set in. In his day Moses got the blame. It is easy to blame the leader. Subject to such pressures we ought not to be surprised that pastors double or triple their efforts in the quest for an extra dimension, that dynamic, or that power that men like Whitefield had. If it is thought that a group possesses this inestimable treasure, this priceless commodity, then surely there will be many who will travel over oceans and cross deserts to get 'it'.

But we are far more likely to find God in the lowly places of Isaiah 57:15 than in the high places of our own euphoria and self-made jubilations. When God the Holy Spirit comes down there is a heightened sense of sin and unworthiness. There is a realisation of the awesomeness of God and a profound realisation of the holiness of his character.

Inevitably we will receive complaints that the report is unfair, biased and distorted.

In defending the report of the conference I would use the analogy of painting. The masters do not put everything on their canvasses. With limited images they choose to make an impact. Goya tells the whole story, and he tells it accurately on one canvas, namely, *The execution of the Spaniards by the French.* Jan Steen likewise tells the whole story of the domestic scene in his painting of a family, *St Nicholas Eve.* Each member of that family is marvellously portrayed as doing his or her own thing.

The journalist has a similar role. He paints with his descriptions and what he paints will be recognised as true or false by those who are familiar with the subject matter.

Anthony Coppin has for seven years been a member of Peel Street Strict Baptist Church, Accrington, Lancashire. He is professional journalist. On his journalistic canvas he has included the subject of prophecy. The claim is made that this issue could divide evangelicalism into two. Such does seem to be the case in many countries, not only England. The problem is that we cannot see room for two kinds of prophecy. The prophecy which is the Bible can be likened to Noah's ark which weathered the most violent of all storms and negotiated the most cataclysmic of waters. The present confident claims for modern prophecy are like the boastings which preceded the launching of the so called unsinkable ocean liner, the *Titanic.* Specific prophecies so far attempted have been like the *Titanic,* sent to the bottom by the iceberg of reality. If the present claims for the gift of prophecy are to have any credibility then some powerful vindications will be necessary. That gift will surely soon be put to the test. When it is let us be ready to pick up as many survivors as we can!

Mrs Serafima Yudintseva

Pictured on the front cover of the last issue was Mrs Yudintseva of the Soviet Union whose husband is in prison because of his Christian testimony. For the same reason she was due to be taken from her six children and imprisoned, but this sentence has now been annulled, for which we are very thankful.

Free Grace among Baptists in the Southern States of America

Drew Garner, pastor of the Bellaire Reformed Baptist Church, Texas, has written an eight page history of the free grace movement among Baptists in the Southern States of America. This fascinating account is ready to be included in *RT 98.*

Computer science

Our subscribers will be encouraged to know that through generous tuition by Christian friends we have attained heights of computer science that at one time we never dreamed possible. You should in future be able to know the state of your subscription by looking at the label on the envelope. This does not mean that we will rely solely on that for reminders. If something does go wrong please write to us. The fault is always ours and can never be attributed to the system.

The humiliation and exaltation of Christ

An exposition of Philippians 2:1-11

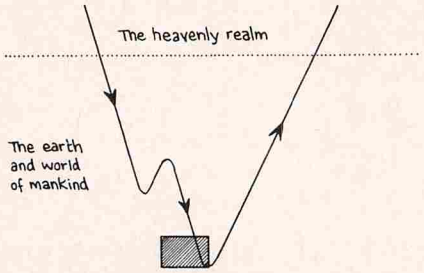
Paul's concern in writing to the Philippians was that they should have the same mind or attitude as exemplified by Christ Jesus, who though he was very God humbled himself to be a man, a servant, and ultimately went to the cross.

Never despise preaching which is theological. The apostles employed the richest theology (knowledge of God), to inspire Christian living. Here Paul uses the theology of the incarnation to promote humility and unity in the church. In the contemplation of the divine and human natures of Christ we are involved in the highest realms of knowing God. As we enter into the subject of the incarnation and its implications it is important to realise our union with this person, the God-man. I am actually one with him! I will be made like him! By union with him I possess the world to come! That is a staggering reality. Is that true of you? Can you say the same?

The ultimate mystery is that of the Trinity which is eternal. The word 'mystery' in Scripture is used not to denote something that we cannot understand but rather something that was hidden but is now revealed (Eph 3:9). However the word is also used to convey the idea of something extremely profound. If the Trinity is the ultimate mystery then next to it is the incarnation. Hence the assertion of 1 Timothy 3:16, 'Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great:

He appeared in a body,
was vindicated by the Spirit,
was seen by angels,
was preached among the nations,
was believed on in the world,
was taken up in glory.'

All the godliness we ever have is derived from him and on account of our union with him. As we view Philippians 2:1-11 and verses 5-9 in particular it is important to observe the movement from glory to the lowest depths of humiliation, and then back to glory. This movement can be likened to a graphical movement as follows:



We might think that the Son of God would be lost in obscurity, but in his ministry his deity was gloriously manifested, especially when the Father audibly declared his love for him and approved his work. The graph takes an upward turn for the three years of his public ministry, but then plunges down to the death of the cross. For the final and last three hours there is a darkness which is so intense that no mortals can enter there. From the moment of his decease the graph is upward only, all the way back to glory, from whence he came.

The stages can be described as follows, 1. The glory possessed, 2. The humiliation undertaken, and 3. The exaltation bestowed.[1]

1. THE GLORY POSSESSED

'Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped' (verse 6). With respect to Christ's deity he is the same yesterday, today and forever. It belongs to the very nature of God triune that the three are One and the One are three. That cannot change. God is immutable, that is unchangeable. The glory of Christ in his eternal pre-existence was a glory of being and a glory of status. In his being as God he enjoyed all the attributes of deity. In his status he enjoyed the role of administrator or king.

To leave that behind and become an infant was a step which involved humiliation of a unique nature.

2. THE HUMILIATION UNDERTAKEN

Let us note the steps involved in his humiliation. The progression downward is noteworthy. Seven steps can be observed. Since the whole passage concentrates on the theme of Christ's humiliation as the basis for our humbling ourselves I will major on that.

(i) He did not grasp at equality with God. What he did he did voluntarily. He could have preferred to keep his position. He did not.

(ii) But he made himself nothing, that is he made himself of no reputation. Particular care is required in understanding verse 7. 'He made himself of no

reputation' (KJV & NKJV). 'He emptied himself' (RSV, NASB, *Jerusalem*), 'but he made himself nothing' (NIV, NEB), and GNB paraphrases: 'did not try to remain equal' (in ftnote), 'instead of this he gave up all he had.' To get to the literal meaning we have to grapple with the Greek word *ekenosen* which literally means became vain (empty) and of no purpose. The same stem (*kenos,* to no purpose), is used in Galatians 2:2, 2 Corinthians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:5; Ephesians 5:6. We can understand therefore that with respect to his glorious attributes of deity, his omniscience, and his omnipotence; that for a while he ceased consciously to employ them. He laid them on one side. They became as dormant and as still as was the sleeping infant Jesus in the manger. He did not shed some of his divine attributes and keep others. That would make him a hybrid, something less than God. What did happen was overwhelmingly dramatic. By taking manhood the exercise of his divine attributes were laid aside. He who holds the universe together (Col 1:15-17), lay in the arms of Mary.

The wonder of it was that he did not cease to be what he was. He was just as much God as he was before. In his ministry we see flashes of that deity, and in the transfiguration he laid aside for a little while the veil that hid that deity.

In humbling himself he became what he was not before. He took manhood to himself. He became man, as completely man as he was always completely God. There was no deficiency in his manhood just as there was no deficiency in his Godhood. From Mary he derived his manhood. He was born of her by the Holy Spirit in such a way as to be totally *without sin.* He possessed a real human personality quite unique, just as every man has a unique personality. Everything that constitutes a whole and true and perfect man was his.

Even though he possessed a perfect human nature that human nature could not fully comprehend deity. There is a mystery in the perfect union of the two natures because at all stages the human is inferior to the divine. When he entered upon his ministry his divine nature became increasingly evident but it was always veiled by his manhood, and never more so than in his sufferings and death.

(iii) Taking the very nature of a servant. The use of the Greek word *morphe* here points back to the same word used in verse 6, who being in the very form (*morphe*) God. As fully and completely as he was God, so fully and completely was he a slave or servant. We are reminded of the majestic servant passages of Isaiah especially the climax of those passages, namely, Isaiah 53. In every detail he fulfilled the will of his Father whom he loved perfectly, thus fulfilling the law. We who at our very best sin in thought, word and deed, must surely wonder at the life of the Servant of Jahweh who never sinned in thought, word or deed! He was made under the law which was comprehensive (Gal 4:4). He fulfilled the demands of that law to perfection. Therefore he is the end (satisfaction) of the

law for us (Rom 10:4). The righteous requirements of the law are fully met in us because they were fully met in him (Rom 8:4).

(iv) Being made in human likeness. All this has to do with the humiliation which he undertook. To become an infant and then a child, and then an adolescent, was exceedingly humiliating for the pre-existent all glorious divine person. The humiliation included full participation in manhood.

Christ is unique inasmuch as he is the only man whose nature from conception was joined in personal union with the divine nature. It was by the work of the Holy Spirit that he derived a sinless, perfect human nature from Mary (Luke 1:35; Heb 4:15). We have in God's Son a perfect man who possessed a human intellect and personality of his own. There was nothing that we can ascribe to man that we cannot ascribe to him, sinfulness excepted. He experienced all the trials and was subject to all the emotions to which we are subject. Because of his perfect human nature he experienced intensity in his emotions. In compassion, in tears, and in righteous anger we do not experience to the same degree what he experienced because of our hard and calloused natures. He was never hardened or calloused but possessed a sensitivity which greatly increased his sufferings.

(v) And being found in appearance as a man. The discrepancy between the Creator and created beings is so great that we can hardly conceive it. How can the infinite Creator become a creature? The discrepancy between an angel and the Creator is unbridgeable, more so man. But what is our response to that humility expressed when God becomes one with fallen mankind? – that is man under the curse of death, dying man, man with the deathly decay of leprosy or Aids! For the Creator to make himself one or to unite with a perfect and unfallen race would be difficult enough to grasp, but here we have the Creator uniting himself with a race under the curse of sin and death! For him to become an integral part of this huge hospital or infirmary of mental and physical disease is staggering in its nature. Can any humility match this? We like to associate with winners, with Olympic champions, with the best, with the illustrious; not with failures, not the weak, and certainly not with the dying. But he humbled himself, left his glorious station, the unfettered exercise of his deity, to make himself one with sinners groaning under the sentence of death.

(vi) He humbled himself, and became obedient to death. Death is our most formidable enemy: the last and most feared foe. Despite their bluff and bravado all men are held in the bondage and fear of death (Heb 2:15). What sorrows surround the death of man! For the God-man to writhe and expire was desperately humiliating.

(vii) Even death on a cross. The emphasis here is on the fact that the cross was for criminals. In Jewish law it was a curse to be hanged on a tree. In Roman law

crucifixion was reserved only for the vilest offenders. It was forbidden for Roman citizens, even if they were guilty of murder.

Christ's obedience as servant took him along the path not only of active obedience but to the passive subordination of himself to a death which was a death of deaths, a death of unspeakable accursedness and damnation. His was a vicarious death, which means a death borne and suffered for others. Such was the dreadful nature of the death that Christ endured that it could not be worse. All the inventions and devices of the cleverest and most hateful devils of hell could not devise a worse death! Every form of physical and spiritual suffering combined to overwhelm him. Bearing our iniquities he sank to the lowest depths conceivable. From heaven he humbled himself to a sinful earth, and from a sinful earth he humbled himself to the lowest abyss. Lower and lower he sank until the only cry we could hear from the fiery pit into which he descended was the cry of dereliction, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' It was in that vortex that the greatest transaction, our sin for his righteousness, was finally settled.

3. THE EXALTATION BESTOWED

Therefore God exalted him. The first observation is that our Lord was rewarded for his work. He himself declared that he had completed the work given to him (Jn 17:4). We are rewarded according the principle of grace (1 Cor 3:8). God's Son is rewarded for the intrinsic merit of his life and obedience even to the death of the cross.

To the highest place. This is important because the raising of Jesus from the dead, and the exalting of him to the highest place is the surest guarantee possible that his work on our behalf is acceptable. The righteousness he has procured for us is certain. If there was any defect or imperfection or fault he would not be exalted to the highest place. There would be a delay while the matter was queried or investigated. No such delay! He has been exalted and he now lives and reigns for us.

And gave him the name that is above every name. We must observe the importance of Christ's exaltation as a man. His manhood was exalted. The meaning here surely points primarily to the man. The glory of his Godhood was the same as it had ever been. He had never ceased to be God. It is true that we must not allow any false division of his person for he is essentially and perfectly one without confusion: perfect man and perfect God, yet not two, but one Christ. At this point we should focus on his humanity. It was as man for us that he had been fearfully degraded and horribly mutilated, more so than any other, 'his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man' (Is 52:14). They crucified the man Christ Jesus. Pilate had exclaimed *Ecce homo* 'Behold the Man!' Look what they did to him! He was not recognisable. It was this derelict man that God exalted. To Jesus now is given the highest name, *the name* which

is above every name, the name of Jahweh. To this man we must all come, for this man is the judge of the world. In his status as man he is to take the highest place. Every tongue will have to confess that this man is Lord, this same man whom they killed.

The powers and glory of Christ's human mind and body were greatly increased in his resurrection, and even more so as he entered the heavenly realm. This is very important for us, for we will be made like him in his human nature. In his deity he is unique, but in his manhood he is one with us. We look forward to having a body like his. Our powers of mind and body will be vastly increased when we are glorified to be like him.

Practical application

We have observed the humiliation undertaken and endured by Christ. From the highest place of glory to the lowest conceivable place he went voluntarily. His humanity was the veil which hid his divine worth. Never was so worthy a person so little appreciated or so disregarded. Never has anyone deserved allegiance and respect like him. Yet when he died on the cross it was so wretched that those who saw him could easily conclude, 'Despicable wretch! His case is so shameful that even God has deserted him! Perdition is his! Hell is his lot!' Christ bore such desperate misery as that! *Yet that is God on the cross!* Omnipotence was his. 'Come down!' they taunted. For our sake he refused. His will to suffer in our place reigned. Never did he reign better in his will than he did then. His was a will of love to redeem us.

Surely we must be careful to take to heart the exhortation, 'your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.' We are often tempted to be impatient and disagreeable in our church and family relationships. Especially is this so when we feel we are not appreciated. When we work hard and receive no thanks, we must be like him. We must have his mind. We must persevere. We must be humble as he was. Remember the distance he travelled in the humiliation he undertook. Your work may be humble. You might be the one who keeps the church property tidy, constantly cleaning away the mess and litter thrown upon the premises. Nobody seems to notice.

But the Lord sees your service. He takes note of every cup of cold water in his name. He will reward you. Jehovah lives with those who have a lowly and contrite spirit (Is 57:15). Never allow yourself to forget the incomparable nature of the incarnation. Especially remember the humiliation he undertook to save you from the hellish and eternal death you deserve. Model your humility upon his. And if you have not yet come into union with him by believing on him and repenting of your sins then ponder this; if he humbled himself to such a degree, will he not receive you when you heed his gracious invitation to come to him?

[1] I have followed Professor John Murray's three principal headings. See Philippians 2:5-9. *Works* vol 3 p 236 ff, Banner of Truth, and acknowledge with gratitude inspiration received from listening to the cassette in which he preached on that subject at an early Leicester Conference. Editor.

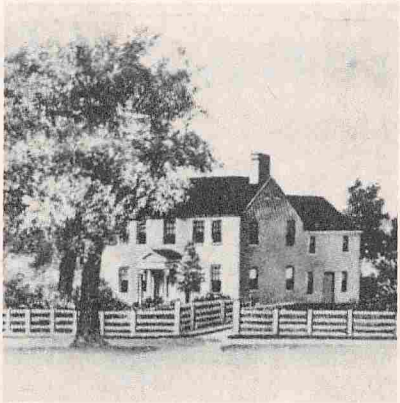
Book Notices

Review articles are being prepared for the IVP production FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH by James Montgomery Boice, 740 pp, and Iain Murray's new BIOGRAPHY OF JONATHAN EDWARDS, 500 pp, £10.95.

The presentation of the latter is a work of art. During the times of the Reformation major books were sometimes specially bound to be presented to rulers. This handsome volume is ready as it is to send to some of the more thoughtful civil and religious leaders of the USA, with a covering letter drawing attention to the fact that their nation has never had a better theologian than Jonathan Edwards. I am sharing my review preparations with Dr John Piper, pastor of the Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, who has specialised in a study of Edwards.

Now complete is the Banner of Truth set of Ryle on the Gospels, seven paperbacks in all. The good bishop would surely appreciate the attractive covers which adorn his work which continues to edify so many round the world. Each volume sells at £2.95 but the two larger volumes, vol 2 of Luke and vol 2 of John at £3.50.

Readers of *RT* will differ widely in their views of prophecy although it is unlikely that many will be dispensationalists. THE BIBLE AND THE FUTURE by A. A. Hoekema, large size bound volume, 345 pp, £8.00 Paternoster (Eerdmans in the USA) is comprehensive, scholarly, thorough and just as readable as the words of Hendriksen. The author does not have the majestic concept of the glory of God in history as did the aforementioned Edwards.



Edwards' home on Main Street, Stockbridge, as it appeared in the last century. Originally built by John Sergeant in 1737, and occupied by him until 1739, Edwards was to purchase the house after some hesitations.

Nevertheless the work is to be commended for its robust character and also because he brings us right up to date with his references to other contemporary writers especially those of the Dutch and German schools. There are two parts: Inaugurated Eschatology (which takes the reader up to p 68), and Future Eschatology. Much of the volume is taken up with the basic doctrines: death, immortality, the intermediate state, the final judgement, eternal punishment, and the new earth. Hoekema outlines major millennial views and deals in particular with Revelation 20. There is a chapter of 28 pages with the title, A critique of dispensational pre-millennialism.

In the first part of this article, published in RT *96, the institution of tithing was described, together with its place in revivals in Old Testament times. Further principles are now drawn from the Old Testament, before looking at the teaching in the New.*

Principles of Christian Giving II

Peter Parkinson

Old Testament Practice *(cont)*

The Principles of Pastoral Support

The principle that we find in the Old Testament is that the priests and Levites should receive adequate provision. They should experience no financial burdens or hardships, and not be troubled by having to provide for themselves and their families by secular employment, but should be able to give themselves wholly, completely and totally to the work of the ministry. The Law was so structured as to compensate for failure on the part of those who were backsliders, in order to ensure the adequate support of the priesthood.

The duty of God's people in the Old Testament was to bring to the priests a sacrifice, a tithe, which the priest himself would enjoy, but of which, as he sacrificed, the bringer would also partake. Part of the priest's ministry was to share some of the tithe with the bringer. However, the giving of these tithes to the priests served to enable the priests to undertake a wider ministry to Israel, to be conversant with God's Law by devoting themselves to study, prayer and meditation, in order that they could faithfully preach God's Law and thus point the people to God.

Comparing this with the New Testament, we may observe that the tithing of believers in the New Testament reaps for them the same benefits as the tithing of believers in the Old Testament. The tithings that God's people bring to God's house support the ministry, and the very ministry that they support brings to them spiritual food of which they may partake, when they come to God's house on the Lord's Day. Week by week the gospel minister should present God's people with a feast of God's Word.

Caring for the Material Property of the Church

It would be helpful for us to note where the finances for the building of the temple and, maybe more significantly, of the tabernacle, came from.

A vital principle in today's situation is to consider where finances should be drawn from for maintaining the fabric of the church. In our day there are many large, old buildings, which are extremely expensive to maintain and not a few churches will find a substantial part of their income being directed to the support of those buildings.

The principle which we must consider here is this, one tenth of all the income of God's people, of the tithe, was directed primarily to the support of the priesthood. In addition, free-will offerings, vowed offerings, first fruit offerings and sacrifices were also directed to the support of the ministry and the priesthood. The cost of the building of the temple and the tabernacle, and their subsequent support, was derived from a completely separate source.

If we look in the book of Exodus, chapter 25, we find the source of income for the building of the tabernacle, namely, freewill offerings (v1), *not* the tithe.

Note, God specifically says, 'from each man whose heart prompts him to give'. Now this is a totally different situation from the priesthood, because there we are told, whether a man's heart prompts him or not, he is to tithe, but here it is a freewill offering which is to build the house of God.

Exodus 35:20-29 and 36:3 show that the Israelites gave so generously that they had to be restrained from giving more.

This brings a note of extraordinary triumph into these verses from Exodus, and let us not underestimate the great blessing that God's people enjoyed in contributing to the building of the tabernacle. We must not minimise the spiritual blessing which will be attendant upon a people sacrificially contributing to the decoration, furnishing, or purchasing of a building to be used as a place of worship. It is a great ministry to ensure that we have a chapel (house of God), which is furnished, cared for, cleaned and looked after in a manner fitting for God's house, that those entering may be made aware that here, Lord's Day by Lord's Day, God's people meet to worship the God whom they love and adore.

We do, however, have to ask ourselves the radical question of whether we are justified in directing our tithe to the maintenance of the property, or whether we should be looking to extra income, other than our tithe, for such a ministry.

Observations from the Old Testament

Firstly, as we draw to a conclusion our consideration of these Old Testament passages, what we might observe from the preceding is that it was clearly God's intention in the Old Testament to ensure that his priests and ministers and those whose business it was to be engaged in temple duties, were adequately provided for by his people. He therefore instituted the practice of tithing, the tithe being a tenth of the gross income of God's people. It is quite clear that this tithe was intended to be a tenth of the total actual income that God's people received. They were not expected to deduct from their income living costs or other expenses.

The second important issue for us to note is that the tithe was intended to be for the support of the priesthood. Clearly though, a proportion of the tithe was also to be used for the support of others who were in particular need, but who were within the house of God. It should be noted that the administration of those gifts was to be the responsibility and duty of the priesthood.

Thirdly, we might note that the assumption is clearly made that the tithe will be given from the fullness of the believer's heart and its giving is associated with times of spiritual blessing and refreshment. It is noteworthy that the tithe has to be re-introduced every time Israel falls into sin and rebellion from God. The generous support of the priesthood is one of the hallmarks of true renewal and revival.[1]

THE WITNESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Old and the New

We move now to the New Testament. The question which is often asked is whether the tithing principle of the Old Testament is continued in the New. The argument for many people hinges around the issue as to whether or not the Old Testament Law is binding on the New Testament Christian.

This whole question is a crucial one when considering the principle of tithing. We must note, in this regard, how our Lord and the apostles seem to have no problem or inhibitions in moving quite easily from the Old to the New. We find the apostle Paul quite freely using the principles laid down in the Old Testament and citing them as mandatory for Christians in the New, eg 1 Corinthians 9:8-10; 2 Corinthians 13:1; Romans 12:19-20 and 1 Corinthians 5:12-13. A careful examination of Scripture will show that Paul constantly cites Old Testament Scripture and principles.

Our Lord's use of the Old Testament is significant also. In the Gospel of Matthew alone Jesus is recorded as quoting the Old Testament directly on over thirty occasions, showing that he referred to it constantly. Notice particularly his quoting and upholding of the Law in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5), and of the Ten Commandments in Matthew 15:3-9; 9:19 and 22:30-40.

What we should note carefully is that there is no suggestion that the principles and instructions in the Old Testament are nullified when we come to the New. We should therefore assume that the principles of Christian living in the New will be no less than the principles by which believers in the Old Testament had to conduct themselves.

We have two clear exceptions to this rule. The first is that of the sacrificial system. The writer of Hebrews explicitly demonstrates that there can be no further use of sacrifices, because of the sacrifice of Christ.

Secondly, with regard to circumcision, the Old Testament practice is replaced by the ordinance of baptism.[2]

1. Jesus' words on tithing

Few would dispute that in the New Testament the principle of pastoral support is very clearly set forward, but tithing has been an area of controversy. The words of our Lord in Luke 11:42 have been quoted by some to argue that tithing is no longer necessary.

The latter part of the verse, however, reads, 'You should have practised the latter *without leaving the former undone.'*

Our Lord is establishing the need for continuing the practice of tithing, giving God a tenth of our income and of our possessions. What he is showing to the Pharisees, is that legalistically giving a tenth of one's possessions, including the product of one's garden, is not the real essence of godly living.

2. Pharisaical tithing

The picture we have of the Pharisees is that far from them cheerfully bringing money into the house of God, they rather came into God's house and with great pride and ostentation put their tenth into the offering. We might note that most of these men were rich and the tithe would not represent a painful sacrifice.

Our Lord is not, then, eliminating or condemning the practice of tithing. He is, rather, exposing erroneous attitudes to tithing. We may in fact observe that what he is actually requiring of the Pharisees is that their gifts should demonstrate their love for God and their fellow man, in their case requiring the giving of substantially more than a tithe.

3. Giving and accepting hospitality

In Luke 10:1-16, we see our Lord sending out seventy-two of his disciples.

He shows quite clearly that it is the responsibility of those who benefit from gospel ministry, to care for the needs of its ministers. He exhorts these seventy-two to accept freely and willingly hospitality which is offered, to assume that there will be those who will welcome them in, and to receive whatever is given them, stating that 'The worker deserves his wages'. He is therefore indicating that the minister of the gospel deserves and ought rightly to be fully supported in the work of the gospel.

The Corinthian Correspondence

In 1 Corinthians 9 the apostle Paul demonstrates how grieved he is that the Corinthians failed to support him adequately in the gospel.

1. Paul citing an OT principle

Verse 6 quite clearly indicates that the apostles were not engaged in other occupations, but were fully supported in the work of ministry. In verse 7 and following, Paul lays down some very important principles and quotes from Deuteronomy 25:4. 'Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain'. 'Is it about oxen that God is concerned?' asks Paul, showing that those who labour in the gospel have a right to receive a living from their work.

Observe that the apostle Paul makes a direct allusion to Old Testament principles, first of all to the Law (Deut 25:4), and secondly, he directly alludes to the principle we have been considering from the Old Testament, that of the Levites being supported by the tithes of God's people (v.13).

2. 'In the same way!'

To those who would argue that the Old Testament principles of support are not relevant to the New Testament, the apostle Paul says in verse 14, 'In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel'.

What he is saying is, that in the same way which in the Old Testament the Levites and priests, those who served at the altar and those who worked in the temple, were supported by the people of God, so those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

It is noteworthy that in verse 13 he identifies those who work in the temple and those who serve at the altar. There were those who served at the altar who, of course, were the priests, but there were others employed in the work of the temple and he is showing that all those who were engaged in the ministry of the religious life of Israel were supported. Again, he says, 'in the same way *all* those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel' (whether apostles, prophets, pastors, deacons, evangelists).

3. Generosity – the Christian's call

We may move on, however, to the second letter of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians, because he continues his theme of support in that letter. In 2 Corinthians 8 he exhorts the Corinthian church to generosity.

The principles that we find laid down here are very important indeed. It is not because of the Law that we should give. The apostle Paul makes specific mention and point of the fact that he was *not commanding* them to give (v.8). It would not be appropriate in the New Testament or in a gospel church, to make it a law of membership that people must give one tenth of their income.

Then verse 5 is so important, 'they gave *themselves first to the Lord* and then to us, in keeping with God's will'. The important issue is that we give ourselves first to the Lord, and giving what we are able to the cause of the gospel is simply an expression of our having given *ourselves* to the Lord.

The apostle shows that in the same way as in the Old Testament the priests were supported, so, in the New Testament, ministers must be supported. So the tithing principle must continue, not legally but out of love and gratitude for the blessings we have in Christ.

4. The ultimate motive

The ultimate constraint on God's people is found in verse 9. Jesus Christ is cited as an example, 'He was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor'. The implication of the apostle Paul is very simply this, if he was rich yet for our sakes became poor, should we not be prepared to become poor for him?

We may say, whereas in the Old one tenth was sacred to the Lord, in the New, our whole being, everything we possess, is sacred to the Lord.

5. The spiritual consequences of a tendency towards meanness

In chapter 9 of 2 Corinthians the apostle Paul sets forward a very clear principle. We are told that those who sow sparingly will reap sparingly. We cannot say that for a person to give generously will mean they will receive substantial material blessings from God. What we can say, is that a person giving generously of their material possessions to the work of the gospel, will most certainly ensure that he reaps generously spiritual blessings from the hand of God.

6. Liberty not law

Secondly, each man is exhorted to give what he has decided in his heart to give. Here we see the individual responsibility of coming before God to consider our particular circumstances and our particular case. Again, we cannot overstress that we have the whole testimony of the Old Testament to provide us with a guide as to the level at which we begin our considerations.

The Pastoral Epistles – *1 Timothy 5*

In verse 17 the apostle Paul speaks about the support of elders who labour in the Word and doctrine. We must consider the context in which the apostle Paul is speaking in 1 Timothy 5. He is speaking about support and caring for those who are in need, in particular, on a practical level, of the financial support of widows. He observes in verse 3 that a person who is truly a widow, a person who does not have children who can support her, should be supported. It may be noted that the NIV gives a very inaccurate and poor translation, 'Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need'. The verse simply says 'honour the real widows'. In other words, the word 'honour' *(timē),* is in this context quite clearly speaking about the financial *caring* for widows.

Linguistically there is no doubt that *timē* (*timaō* – I honour), means honorarium. This same word is used, speaking of double-honour. What is being said here is not necessarily that the minister of the gospel who labours well should be paid double the wages of anybody else in the church, but very simply this, that the church must be ready to provide *generously* for the material needs of those who labour in the gospel. As I may demonstrate in a further article, the practice in most independent churches as against many denominational churches, is to provide *not* double honoranium, but a totally unworthy and disgracefully stingy financial support for their labourers. Note verse 17 says, 'The elders who direct the affairs of the church *well* are worthy of double-honour'. In other words, there will be some who labour industriously and zealously and require worthy support for the administrative costs incurred by their enterprise for the gospel.

The Epistle to the Galatians – *Galatians 6:6-10*

Martin Luther, in his commentary on Galatians, parallels this message to Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians, that those who sow spiritual seeds should be able to reap the material fruits of their spiritual ministry.

Paul's exhortation is very specific and commends great generosity. The whole context of these verses is speaking about the practicality of the Christian faith, our duty to do good to all people, especially those who are of the family of believers. Clearly, Paul is calling the Christians of the New Testament to recognise their special and peculiar duty to ministers of the gospel and to those who are of the household of faith.[3]

Giving to Others

In 1 Corinthians 16 and the first four verses, the apostle Paul alludes to the collection for God's people. It seems quite clear to me that the gift Paul speaks about is a gift which is to be regularly set aside by each believer in accordance with his ability, in accorda ce with his income. It is not a gift that is to be taken from those gifts directed to the support of the ministry.

Increasingly it has become the practice in recent days for Christians to believe that they have a responsibility as Christians, or that the Christian church has a responsibility as the Christian church, to support those who are not necessarily Christians. I think it can be very strongly argued that it would be quite improper for any Christian to redirect a tithe, that is a tenth of the Christian's income, to any source other than the direct support of the gospel ministry.

We see then that the first call on the believer's finance is the support of ministry within the local church, and secondly, to consider support on a wider basis.

The giving to secular organisations, or Christian organisations involved in distributing essentials to those who are not Christians, may be a call that Christians are required to consider, but should not in any way encroach upon the tithing of God's people, or their freewill offerings to God's house. Rather, it should come from the abundance of our gifts, after our due tithes and offerings to God's house have been observed.

Practical Matters

With regard to giving, perhaps we should consider whether the right way for money to be used and directed would be the following:

a. God's people should give a proportion of their income (the tithe being the base level from which people give). That tithe, plus any surplus the Lord's people feel moved by the Spirit of God to give, should be given directly to the church for, and only for, Christian ministry. This sum should be the basic weekly or monthly offering of God's people to the Lord's house. All monies so received should be used exclusively for the payment of wages of pastors, teachers, evangelists and full-time Christian workers.

b. On top of that basic gift, individual Christians should consider other causes and needs to which they would like to make contributions. Under separate cover, money should be sent to the church for the purchase and upkeep of the church property and the various aspects of the church's work, but none of the money given in tithes or gifts for the ministry should be used for any of these latter purposes.

c. Where monies received for ministry exceed the needs of those employed by the church, those in employment – pastors, full-time elders or full-time deacons – together ought to prayerfully consider where the surplus money should be directed. Those causes for which they would be concerned should be: 1. The support of other faithful gospel ministers. 2. The needs of the poor within our own local church. 3. The needs of others outside our local church.

However, the giving of gifts to support poor Christians, other than in our own church, should clearly have the general consent of the membership.

Conclusions

I think we might conclude by making a very simple observation. If the people of God in our generation and if we, in our churches, simply undertake to try to implement the biblical principles we have outlined here, the potential for Christian ministry would be revolutionised. The Church's effectiveness in the world would be utterly transformed.

It may be that some of us need to reconsider our giving and possibly some need to redirect money being given to others. Care must be taken that we do *not* become a law unto ourselves, but that we follow clearly defined biblical principles.

Why does revival tarry? . . . read Malachi 3.

Generosity and spiritual discipline surely are evidences of true godliness. Most certainly though, meanness and the inadequate support of the ministry is evidence of spiritual lethargy and backsliding.

I exhort you all with the words of God.

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. 'Test me in this,' says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it' (Mal 3:10).

Notes

[1] See Keil and Delitzsch on Deuteronomy 19 and 12:20ff for helpful observations on this subject.
[2] Col 2:11, 12. See *Children of Abraham,* David Kingdon.
[3] See Luther's commentary on Galatians 6:6.

The coca-cola god of America

Presented at prime viewing time for the UK on April 14th was a documentary with the title THY KINGDOM COME. This depicted the fundamentalist movement which *claims* the support of 90 million people, 40 per cent of the American population. For those described (dubiously?) as 'born again', religion and politics are a single issue, expressed as a right-wing moral crusade against abortion, homosexuality, disarmament, and the régime in Nicaragua. Their weapon is television and their power is the dollar. One of them is Pat Robertson the 'Christian' presidential candidate. Two who occupied centre stage of the documentary were Jim and Tammy Bakker, a couple who have created an evangelical Disneyland called HERITAGE USA.

Thanks to friends in the USA who have educated me with regard to the fundamentalist scene in their country the programme was not too much of a shock. We can be sure however that the damage done to evangelical religion in the UK will be beyond computation. The effect on unbelievers will be a sigh of relief that they have steered clear of such deception with its extortion, its fanaticism, and its self-righteousness. The programme left its viewers with a chilling fear of the possibility of a fundamentalist American president with a crazy apocalyptic spirit leading him to think that he will fulfil prophecy by raining down nuclear destruction on Russia.

Our deepest and most heartfelt sympathy is extended to our American subscribers who have to live in a country with so much false Christianity. Let us say that we too have a moral campaign. That is needed. But how do you separate the precious from the vile, and how can we crusade without taking on board the overtones of self-righteousness? More important how do we dissociate from the wildest and most bizarre use of Scripture as far as prophecy is concerned? It would appear that American fundamentalism urgently needs a massive corrective by way of courses in hermeneutics, that is principles of interpretation. What did the apocalyptic writings mean to those to whom they were addressed? That is a prime question. Published by IVP in the USA is Joel Green's, *How to read prophecy.* That is a slim book. More comprehensive is Milton S. Terry's *Biblical Hermeneutics* (Zondervan).

It could be argued that this programme was typical of modern TV journalism, the choice of the worst possible bits. That is true but it is equally true that the worst possible bits are a reality. The exploitation of an 18 year old handicapped boy to extort money spoke volumes, as did Tammy Bakker rolling the tears down her mascara to keep the cash flowing in to the multi-million business. The report of Jim Bakker's adulterous affair with a young girl crowned the programme. It was not the original intention of the producers to include that, but the news had only

recently been confirmed. The commentator made no applications of his own. The film told its own story.

Allowing for exaggeration and especially for the comforting truth that there is a tremendous constituency of sound evangelical Christianity in the USA with a great potential for good in affecting the rest of the world, there are three major issues which I believe we should examine.

1. Idolatry. Isaiah complained of idolators who carved gods out of wood and then did with those idols exactly as they pleased (Is 44:9ff). The god of the TV religious industry in the USA is a dispenser god, a giant machine that does exactly what it is told to do. Put in the dollars and out come the goods! Just as with all dispensers this dispenser god has taps out of which the supplies come. If you command it to produce coca-cola out coca-cola will come. This god of their own manufacture is a moral god. The morals consist of a mixture of absolute values including the sanctity of life, but added is a checklist of political opinions reminiscent of the Klu Klux Klan and the excesses of McCarthyism. We appreciate the dangers of totalitarian Communist states, especially since we live near to them, but we can also see the evils of right wing régimes in South America, régimes responsible for innumerable murders and vast crimes, emanating from the same depravity of fallen human nature that reigns in the Communist overlords. Since when do Christians have to side with one form of depravity as it contends with another? The religion of the fundamentalists is a mixture of good and evil.

The worst evil is the wholesale deception about salvation. The dispenser god also dispenses salvation on demand. Decisionism rules. You decide and god dispenses. The message of the Bible is the message of *repentance toward God* and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This faith includes submission to Christ. Where is repentance in American fundamentalism? The book THE GREAT INVITATION (184 pp, E.P. and Pres and Ref) grapples with this central subject historically and biblically. Jesus asked this question, 'When the Son of Man comes will he find faith on the earth?' In the context he was speaking of the faith of God's elect, a persevering faith which always prays and does not give up. The god of the fundamentalist kind of religion depicted in the programme 'Thy Kingdom Come' is a god bitterly opposed to what we call the doctrines of grace, and is the mortal enemy of the truth that there is a sovereign triune Jehovah who has his very own will which is independent and not dictated to by all and sundry.

2. Man-centredness. This follows logically from the previous point. The only part of the programme which bordered on Biblical Christianity was the testimonies of simple people who claimed that their lives had been changed. Some had been saved from the drug scene and some from alcoholism. Yet in every case MAN was central, as though the only purpose of Christianity is the good of man. But there are many religions that are wholly man-centred and which claim to provide deliverance from addiction. Where, I ask is objective truth? Where is the glory of God's justice? Where is imputed righteousness? These people seem never to have heard of such things!

3. Charismania. To what extent the charismatic movement has taken over American fundamentalism requires careful research and documentation which certainly was not characteristic of the TV programme in view. The religious scenes selected for viewing were typically charismatic. They are all the same in this way. Emotion is squeezed out from within. Aided by music, joy is pumped up from the inside. Alternatively there is a scene of a poor soul surrounded by others who are laying their hands on him and praying with great effort to exorcise a demon or to heal a disease. The emphasis is always on summoning enough spiritual power as though God will not move on this one unless we pool our spiritual powers and constrain him to move.

Conclusions. In our response to the trends that surround us let us resist strongly the pressures put on us to abdicate our responsibility to think through issues. Nobody has the right to tell us who to vote for. Let

Life in the Spirit

A report/review of the Reformed and Renewed Pastors' Conference held at the High Leigh Conference Centre, Hertfordshire, February 1987.

by Anthony Coppin

Reformed and Renewed: This latest theological label to be added to the already long list of groupings, movements, constituencies etc within the U.K. evangelical scene had kept on cropping up in conversations with Christian friends with increasing regularity in 1985 and 1986.

I have followed the fledgling movement's progress from a distance over the past seven years or so as certain well-known pastors have attempted to ignite the supposedly dormant dynamite of reformed doctrine with the fire of the charismatic movement.

I've also followed with sadness the splits in various evangelical churches and publications in the wake of this new movement and seen even close friends casting flirtatious glances in its direction and asking 'Could this be the recipe for revival?'

An advert for the February 1987 Reformed and Renewed conference appeared in *Evangelicals Now* in December 1986. '*Life in the Spirit — a conference for pastors and leaders open to both reformed and charismatic perspectives.*' I lead Bible studies from time to time and lead a fortnightly house group meeting; I'm reformed and

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(continued from page 19)

us resist the brainwashing effects of the mass media. As explained in the editorial there is a place for journalism which alerts us to what is going on and which uses strong images in a form of impressionistic art. That is lawful. But let us determine to think through subjects thoroughly and carefully. Also let us avoid over-reaction. Because the charismatics are subjective does not mean that we should lose the biblical balance of doctrine, practice and experience.

In front of the Temple in Jerusalem there were two free-standing columns whose sole function was to bear pomegranates, the symbol of fruitfulness. On the TV programme we saw some harsh scenes in which fundamentalists got caught up with politics. Let us never forget the absolute requirement for the Christian that we bear the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22).

The second programme, April 21st, focussed on the Southern Baptist Convention with Dallas, Texas, as its centre. We began viewing with fear, 'what further damage will be done to the already battered image of evangelical religion?' The principal interviewer was so blatant in his attempts to discredit fundamentalism that his purpose was largely self-defeating. The famous veteran, pastor Criswell of the First Baptist Church, Dallas, was challenged about the immensely wealthy, palatial five-block complex in central Dallas. How did that appear beside the poor and humble bare-footed Galilean? Criswell answered: "You cannot operate in our culture with bare feet!" The questioner took up the issue of racism. It is pretty obvious that the track record has not been too good in the South. Again Dr Criswell, while by no means satisfying everybody, answered well by pointing to the 26 missions sent out from First Baptist to different racial groups, including one to down-and-outs. Dr Criswell and the SBC came through with dignity, especially since it takes a lot of patience when you know that the intentions of the programme are wholly cynical and negative. But the producers did better in this second programme to distinguish clearly between the SBC and the charismatic movement. The close-ups of the tongue-speaking, illustrating the latter, were sheer agony!

being renewed; I'm charismatic (in the sense in which all Christians are charismatic); I genuinely want to see and hear what arguments and approaches are being put forward by these reformed-plus brethren – to that extent I am open. In the past, I've profited from and been challenged by some of the main speakers, one of whom some years ago produced an excellent book on the Puritans. To my knowledge these people haven't published any detailed doctrinal basis so this conference will be an opportunity to find out at first hand what they *do* believe and practise. I've heard people criticise the distinctive emphases of the Reformed and Renewed movement, basing their criticisms on second or third hand information. That isn't a very good basis from which to pass informed comment – So I apply to attend.

Defences up?

What will this conference be like? I ask myself as I travel to the High Leigh conference centre in Hertfordshire. A not too reassuring answer is provided at a packed session for 'first-timers' addressed by Bernard Thompson. "If you've come a bit fearful of what wonderful things might happen, let me say it's not half as bad as you imagine. Let the Holy Spirit minister into your life and heart. You do not need to put up your defences," he tells the new boys before a short break to shake hands or hug the stranger next to them.

The first 'worship' session comes as something of a shock. I've been in charismatic and pentecostal meetings before, but nothing like this. Drums, synthesizer, piano and trumpet with a heavy beat and rhythm. Within a few minutes, about two hundred hands and arms are waving in the air and many of the 160 or so participants are jigging and jumping about to the modern Dales-type choruses. Good words (some of them), bouncy tunes, but the euphoric response reminds me of Top of the Pops or Cup Final Day. Later, a time of 'open praise' lifts off with a jumble and mumble of 'tongues'. Enthusiastic applause rounds off this 'praise' session (and some of the later ones) but I'm not too sure who, or what, is being clapped.

More shocks are to come in the next few days. At a workshop on 'The Baptism in the Holy Spirit and release into Spiritual Gifts' led by Bernard Thompson and Ben White, men are encouraged to come forward for 'ministry' (laying on of hands and prayer). "If something unusual happens – what the heck!" says Mr Thompson with a dismissive wave of his hand.

Unusual things do happen. Many men go forward. Some men are snivelling and crying. I notice one man jerk as hands are laid on his head. Others begin to swoon and are helped into chairs. Then – help! – this Thompson fellow points at me. (I've been sitting rigidly through this carry-on: apparently he's noticed I'm not exactly entering into the spirit of it.) "I feel the Lord is telling me you are in need of ministry, brother," he says. I look at him, trying not to appear too startled. He suggests two brothers nearby 'minister' to me. I just close my eyes and pray that I can keep a clear head in all this.

I feel hands lightly massaging my neck and shoulders. A fellow with a southern counties accent prays that my hurt will be healed (what hurt?) and reads the Bible over me. I am too nervous to take note of the passage but it certainly isn't 'Lay hands suddenly on no man!' Meanwhile, the other man is praying quietly in 'tongues' over me. I am praying "Lord, keep me calm from all this psychological pressure". It seems to be over. I open my eyes and thank one of the men praying for me. I ask if he has any problem he wants me to pray about. He says he's soon moving to a new pastorate and needs prayer for that. I quietly pray for the Lord to guide this man.

Mr Thompson rounds off the session, encouraging us to enter more into these previously uncharted waters. "This is just dipping your toe in the water" he says. More like a bath of acid, I think to myself.

Can things get any worse? Sadly, yes, and Mr Thompson is still very prominent in the proceedings. His address 'Co-workers with the Holy Spirit' is bizarre in places, frankly crude in others. He gets voices in his head and 'funny words from God in some situations'. He tells us of various

allegedly miraculous occurrences on a recent trip to Kenya and then goes on to talk about the problems encountered by one of his female colleagues who had to take off all her clothes to spray herself with insecticide. (Apparently the gift of healing doesn't stretch as far as insect-bites.) "Talk about a turn-on!" he exclaims. He then tells us about the 'word' he received from God that a woman in the African congregation had a problem with her breast. The content and tone of the story that follows is unfit to be reproduced here. We also learn that on the occasion described (an outdoor meeting), a school-teacher with varicose veins and one leg shorter than the other was 'healed, saved and filled with the Spirit'. In fact on that occasion, sixteen people were born again! Sadly, Mr Thompson never got the chance to preach the gospel because rain stopped play, but the sixteen were born again anyway. Commenting on the downpour, he adds (amid laughter), "I really get annoyed when God does these things like that, before I've preached. . . ."

What was just as worrying – if not more so – than his comments, was the reaction of the conference members: supposedly all reformed men. They had been whipped up into a frenzy of hilarity by Mr Thompson's stage-comedian tales and were falling about laughing as his African adventures were revealed. The whole thing was a flat contradiction of Ephesians 5:4.

The talk continued with a testimony to demonic deliverances and assurances that "God wants to equip you and me" and "The Holy Spirit wants to fill your life". There is another open prayer/'praise-/'tongues'/chorus session at the end, and even a prophecy to the effect: "The Lord says if you are prepared to let God . . . he will fill you."

Mr Thompson prays amid audience chuckles, "Lord make us all daft for you."

At the end of all this there is an appeal for those men who 'feel a failure', to stay behind 'to be ministered to'. This particular failure beats a hasty retreat to his bedroom. No-one will believe me when I get home. They'll think I'm exaggerating or just being my usual ultra-cautious self. That night I pray "Lord, show me reality. This isn't reality. It's a religious ride. I do pray my pastor who knows some of these folk won't be taken in by all this. I feel like going home tomorrow. Lord, keep your people safe from this blind alley cul-de-sac".

Mr Thompson later has a workshop session on 'Prophecy and how to minister the prophetic word into people's lives'. (I always thought the answer to that was to read the Bible to them!) I decide to avoid it – I've seen enough of Mr Thompson's practices. However, I later obtain the tape of the session. My fears are fully justified.

He admits that the charismatic movement "is throwing up a lot of looneys – at Bridgnorth we have our fair share". Among his other comments: "We need to be people with strength and authority to take control of the 'supernatural' (his quotes) events that are taking place in our meetings." "I do believe we have people who can bring a picture from the Lord." "There is a wider sense of a prophetic ministry that moves with apostolic teams and is a complement to the apostolic ministry . . . I won't go into the theory of that." "People have a right in open praise and worship to bring a prophetic word that is an encouragement to the flock." "This prophetic word I give is not infallible. I make mistakes. I am not frightened of getting it wrong." This latter comment is followed by silly jokes about Peter walking on the water – apparently Peter's near-drowning is parallel to Mr Thompson's mistakes in prophecy: they're both the results of 'stepping out in faith'. The meeting finally breaks up into groups of six or seven for 'ministry' to 'release folk into the good of what has been shared'.

Mr Thompson's understanding of the gift of prophecy is startling and a little frightening. We can, he tells us, claim inspiration but not inerrancy. "I say to a brother: I feel God is putting his finger on some immorality in your life. He looks at me puzzled – Oh well." It's difficult to imagine a more cruel understanding of pastoral practice or one further removed from the New Testament.

So, there we have Mr Thompson's contribution. I have focused on it because in

many ways he was the dominant personality of the conference. But now we must turn to the other sessions.

The Main Papers

There were five main lectures and a closing sermon by Peter Lewis, who also gave the opening address 'The Past speaks to the Present'. I was expecting this first talk to be a kind of historical/theological pedigree-tracing of a group which I presume is looking for roots. Having read Mr Lewis's valuable paperback *The Genius of Puritanism* I was looking forward to the lecture. My guess about the approach he would take was wrong. Instead, he gave a helpful overview of preaching and preachers from Luther, Calvin, Latimer and the Reformation, through the Puritans, the New England Revival and Jonathan Edwards, the 18th century revival in Great Britain, mentioning Whitefield, the Wesleys, Berridge and Grimshaw, and the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist, Daniel Rowlands.

The last few minutes of the talk puzzled me. Mr Lewis quoted and explained Edwards' and Rowlands' analyses of unusual phenomena which occurred during their preaching and their meetings ('the holy disorder of men on fire for God . . . it would not be liked in some circles today'). He seemed to suggest that the jumpings, swoonings, shrieks, outcries and bodily reactions which are mentioned and analysed in their works and biographies, are on a par with similar (?) phenomena around today. I may be wrong in thinking that that was his implication, but it certainly came across that way to me.

Steve Brady's paper 'Life after Death – current speculation' was the most intellectually stimulating address of the whole conference.

The third paper was Bernard Thompson's 'Co-workers with the Holy Spirit' which I've already mentioned.

The fourth was on 'Reality and the Supernatural Today' by Donald Bridge, a genial north countryman and author/co-author of several widely read paperbacks.

The Bible vs Experience was, he argued, a "red herring" which he said had recently been "strongly stated by Victor Budgen in *The Charismatics and the Word of God.* His argument is that you can have an inspired authoritative Bible or you can have miracles, charismata and renewal; you cannot have both, because the one contradicts the other, and if you have the second it means you do not believe in the first. The whole argument of the apostolic ministry completing the New Testament and therefore a miraculous ministry not being needed beyond that is a complete non-sequitur, because the inspired scriptures which the apostles produced direct us back to the teaching of the apostles and their practices and lays out guidelines of regulating the miraculous gifts. It (Mr Budgen's argument) is an absurd argument." He summarises his own case by saying that the charismatic gifts function in relation to the body rather than apostolic Bible writing.

After this last point he ends his paper by telling the audience that the pharisees were "totally orthodox, Bible-believing, fundamentalist puritans" stressing "this is not an attack on anybody". I wonder why it follows a criticism of Mr Budgen's line which I understand to have been the view held by mainstream Christianity down the ages.

For me he left fundamental questions unanswered. If these gifts were so vital a part of NT church/body life, why is there only the briefest of references to them in the later epistles? We have a more sure word of prophecy. Are we really in need of latter day revelations (or even Simon the Sorcerers) doing their thing at para-church gatherings, charging £8 a head to get in and suggesting that they are the sole channel of God's moving today? Again, the assumption that 1 Corinthians 12–14 ought to be necessarily the norm for today does not take into account the view that these chapters (along with others) could be descriptive rather than directive.

Stanley Jebb's paper 'Reformed Doctrine and Charismatic Practice' was for me the most disappointing paper. As with Peter Lewis's historical paper I had imagined a detailed theological exposition defining and defending the 'Reformed and

Renewed' position. Instead of harmonisation there was juxtaposition.

Mr Jebb: "The title is what this conference is all about." So how do reformed doctrine and charismatic practice come together? Reformed theology is a useful background against which to work. . . . It is a plumbline to test the manifestation – put the phenomena against Scripture; it provides a matrix into which experiences should fit. . . . Dry and dead doctrine makes us miserable. (This comment was followed by a quip at the expense of poor Professor Murray who even when commenting on 'abundant joy' could only manage a doleful smile.) Prophecy is different from preaching. . . . Don't use the first person singular in prophesying. . . . Healing is not proof of the Holy Spirit's presence – it could be satanic healing: the enemy may mimic things. . . . Fear of the false must not keep us from the true. . . . Reformed theology will cause us not to parade our gifts and to evaluate healings carefully. . . . This is the Sovereignty of God, not manipulation.

Throughout his paper he makes frequent reference to the writings of the Pentecostal theologian Donald Gee (who fell from favour in Pentecostal circles earlier this century because of his increasingly ecumenical and Romeward drift). I really could not follow Mr Jebb's thread.

The final message was from Peter Lewis. 'Triumphant Grace' was a well-presented and, at times, heartwarming defence and exposition of the doctrines of irresistible grace and final perseverance.

Seminars and Workshops

In addition to the main papers and addresses there were also several seminars and workshops. (I have already mentioned the workshops on Baptism in the Spirit and on Prophecy.) Several of the workshops/seminars clashed so folk had to choose which they attended. I did not attend the session on 'Sexual Problems in Leadership' led by Peter Lewis.

The seminars I attended were 'How to implement change' (Francis Bates assisted by Bruce Baker) and 'Music in the Life of the Church' (two sessions) led by Tom Smith, musical director of the church where Bernard Thompson is pastor.

The seminar on implementing change was held in one of the smaller rooms. Just before it opened, someone whispered to a friend coming in through the door, "Welcome to the revolution, brother." Many a true word spoken in jest?

The key phrase for the seminar is *Ecclesia reformata reformanda est.* A handout is provided with quotes from William Cunningham, J. G. Vos, and John Murray. Mr Bates goes through the handout, expanding the material here and there. Sociological analysis abounds. Apparently, in any social grouping in process of change, innovators will constitute 2.5%. Early adopters will be another 13.5%. The early majority: 34%; the late majority: again 34%, the laggards 16%. The rate of change must be carefully controlled. Too slow: no change will be achieved. Too fast: the system can't adjust. Good timing: the rate of change is such that the system can cope. Is the reformation of the church really just a matter of applying sociological principles?

After Mr Bates' address, a discussion follows with questions from the floor. "How do you deal with people who are resistant to change?" "How do you deal with your frustrations when your people are paddling and you are swimming?" For me, the most interesting question asked was "What if one of your congregation comes to you and accuses you of being a different man from when you were first called to the pastorate?" Our two leaders appeared to have different views on this one. Pastor Baker: "A pastor should not be reluctant to come clean and say that I am not the man you called. I have done a U turn, but I want you to hear me out: I believe this is a change for the better. I would ask them for the opportunity to come clean. If they said no, I would get out of the way." Pastor Bates: "You are not called to a church to maintain the status quo" (implying that the church has no ground to complain if the pastor does shift in his thinking).

I must admit that I'm still not exactly sure what the changes or areas of change were that Mr Bates was talking about, or for that matter that were being debated so earnestly afterwards. Are we talking about a reformed pastor adopting the Pentecostal package and how to go about explaining it to his people and getting them onto his new wavelength? Are we talking about team ministry and the end of the pulpit? Are we talking about chucking out traditional hymnbooks and introducing Dales praise? It appears that in some circles any change is automatically considered right and progressive. One pastor counselled his brethren not to go too fast: "One major change a year is probably fast enough for our church. . . ."

Mr Bates in his handout warns us: "Always reforming does not mean always going back to the Reformation." Am I alone in suspecting that in claiming to go *beyond* the Reformation, some brethren are in some areas going *back* on the Reformation and abandoning the Reformers' biblical insights?

In one of the sessions on music Mr Smith outlined how to form a music group – starting with piano, guitars and perhaps introducing flute or violin as well as drums. Time is needed to build up harmony. The musicians should confess their sins to one another to get things right before ministering to the congregation. "It is vital to maintain eye contact. We do not know what is going to happen next . . . this means that the musicians have got to be prepared to sacrifice to a certain extent their freedom to get lost in worship and close their eyes and have a whale of a time." Details were given on PA system/microphone techniques as well as overhead projectors and copyright rules for new songs.

I purchased the tapes of the 'Geared for Growth' seminars which I was unable to attend. I hoped I'd find some useful ideas for evangelism. Again I was disappointed. The first of the two sessions was led by Eric Bird (from Reading). It was largely a review of the renewal experience and the growth of King's Church, Reading, over recent years.

Much of what Mr Bird said related to the role that prophecy continues to play in the various congregations of the Reading church. Mr Bird appeared to take a similar line on prophecy to Mr Thompson. He reminded the audience that at a previous 'Life in the Spirit' conference Peter Lewis had spoken on the doctrine of the NT prophecy and had advocated an approach in line with Wayne Grudem's thesis. He also drew attention to Roy Clements' new booklet on prophecy.

Mr Bird is an interesting man. He receives prophecies when he is mowing the lawn or digging the compost heap. He has prayed for his family's pet cat which has now been "delivered from a spirit of fear and been healed". Mr Bird prefers 'directional' rather than vague prophecies. The former are more important than the latter and have to be "weighed very very carefully". The direction of his own church in Reading has been influenced by a 'picture' of a "funny sort of tree trunk" received by one of the church-members in 1981. This apparently was a prophecy for the church's growth and church-planting ministry.

"It was God's answer to our problem . . . we needed extra-biblical revelation. . . . it does not contradict Scripture. . . . It does not add to objective truth; it gives us precise direction for our own day-to-day outworking of God's purposes."

So, is the 'prophetic word' equal to Scripture? Mr Bird seems to want to have his cake and eat it. "I am not putting prophecy on a level with Scripture but as far as its application goes we can be just as sure of God's word to us in the here and now as we can of God's word to us in Scripture in the sphere of operation where it is required."

It is hard, he says, for people involved in a difficult situation to "hear objectively from God about it". For example, "relatives of a cancer victim are unlikely to hear clearly from God if he is going to take that person to be with himself". (Is this the explanation of the tragically false hopes cherished by David Watson and those around him right up to his death – an example of how personal involvement can obscure God's prophetic word?)

Like other speakers, Mr Bird is quick to point out that his views are nothing novel. Even John Knox had, and knew he had, a 'prophetic ministry' but kept it low-key because of pressure. I suspect that this would be difficult to document.

Outside the Conference Room

Along with the delicious food provided by the catering staff of High Leigh, there was also opportunity for chats over the meals with these chaps. Many of the questions were along the lines of "Is your church open to the things of the Spirit?" or "How's the renewal going in your church?" Other items of conversation among these church leaders included problems with people leaving because things were going too far, and similar problems because things weren't going far enough. The person and works of John Wimber were another talking point, the general opinion being that he's a good chap who goes a wee bit far in some areas. There appeared to be a note of genuine sadness for those Christians who are Reformed but not Renewed: "They are good men but they don't know what they're missing" said one man.

A Strict Baptist pastor from the south asks me what I think of the worship. "Somewhat over the top" I reply, and then more honestly, "Definitely over the top". One man from the Midlands tells me he's here "to test the waters"; another admits to "looking through the windows". Both intimate that they like what they've seen so far.

The reaction of non-renewed brethren within the same group/denomination to the Reformed and Renewed movement is another topic of table talk. I hear some interesting comments about a well-known and respected Strict Baptist, known for his anti-charismatic stance, and how his position has 'hardened' over the years. Another man rejoices in the fact that a certain reformed baptist church down south is "now accepting preachers from outside the reformed tradition". I hear much (uncritical) talk of apostles, prophets, Terry Virgo, John Noble and their various Dales/Wales/Downs extravaganzas. One man gave a potted history of this conference; how it was initiated at Bruce Baker's home in Mottram about seven years ago; how it had grown as more 'reformed' men had seen that there was further light to be gained.

Dr Lloyd-Jones's name came up in several conversations. "How he would have loved this conference," one man said. (Somehow, I doubt that.) Another man said he thought the Banner of Truth Trust had been embarrassed to publish certain of the Doctor's volumes on Ephesians and Romans which have seemingly given impetus and even (so he claimed) respectability to the fledgling Reformed and Renewed movement. Another man criticised the Banner's Leicester conference for its 'long faces and miserable worm theology'. He said that at the last conference he had been 'rounded on' by other delegates and accused of demonism because of his new-found approach on tongues, prophecy, etc. I told one man I thought the Banner was the best thing since sliced bread. He agreed but added that even sliced bread could be improved by a bit of butter.

The bookstall, run by a Restoration man from (I think) the SU shop in Brighton, carried the strangest assortment of religious literature I have ever seen in such a small area. It was constantly surrounded by browsers and purchasers and my resolve to visit it towards the end of the conference was perhaps mistaken as I didn't see all the titles available. I had come across some of them before: Iain Murray's *The Puritan Hope* caught my eye at the same time as Dennis and Rita Bennett's *Nine O'clock in the Morning* (which brought back a few nightmares from my first reading of that comic in 1977). Many of the titles mentioned in the music seminar were there. Also several of the *How to . . .* series edited by Terry Virgo, the apostle of the South: Nigel Wright's *The Radical Kingdom;* Graham Twelftree's *Exorcism Today;* Packer's *Keep in Step with the Spirit.* Also, a new booklet, *Word and Spirit* by Roy Clements (given a major plug by Peter Lewis).

Mr Lewis also gave a major plug for *Evangelicals Now* whose editor, Bob Horn,

was present at the conference. Mr Lewis appealed to the delegates to promote the circulation of this journal in their home churches and to take free samples from the large pile of *EN*'s available in the main hall. "This is a duty, a trust from the Lord. The old editorial board of *Evangelical Times* has sacrificed so much. They have left their comforts and security. They have suffered."

I did not attend the closing communion service and made my way back to Lancashire. While on the train, I tried to set out a few summary points in my own mind about the questions and issues raised by the events of the past few days.

Homeward Thoughts

1. How can the leaders of this conference quote so happily from the great reformed preachers and teachers of the past when those same teachers did not share the views on the work of the Holy Spirit that they are pushing?

2. Why was there so much more emphasis on the 'Renewed' than the 'Reformed'? If this is the kind of marriage Mr Lewis et al have been trying to arrange for the past few years, I can foresee more than a few divorces over the next few years.

3. The need for contemporaneity in presenting the Christian message to the twentieth century is obvious. No-one wants to garnish the tombs of denominational tradition. But to liven up meetings by adding a mini-orchestra and encouraging the participants to indulge their penchant for beat music (labelling the result as 'worship') is surely a recipe for confusion rather than contemporaneity. More fundamentally, how far can this emphasis be reconciled with the NT? Faced with all the varied problems of the churches, where does Paul suggest that tinkering with such externals as musical style will remedy the spiritual needs of the congregations?

4. How can the emphasis on personal anecdotes etc, that marked so conspicuously some of the addresses, be reconciled with Paul's reluctance to narrate his own, at times sensational, experiences? (2 Cor chs 10-12). Didn't Paul suggest that such 'foolish boasting' was the mark of the *false* apostles?

5. Why are some men looking in this direction? Why have some pastors seemingly taken a quantum leap into these realms? Perhaps they have been struggling in small 'traditional' reformed causes for some years and made little progress, and look enviously at the attractions and activism of the charismatic movement. I am reminded of General Custer's words to his troops: "When there doesn't appear to be much going on, move in the direction of the noise. . . ."

6. Suggestions made by Messrs Thompson and Bridge that frequent miracles, signs, etc, help increase the Christian's faith, puzzled me, especially in the light of my recent study of the letter to the Hebrews with its emphasis on Christian faith and hope as resting on the invisible.

7. Why is the recently launched newspaper *Evangelicals Now* so lauded and applauded by the conference leaders?

I urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints (Jude 3). *Contend (epagonizesthai)* – meaning 'contend earnestly', is one of the most striking expressions in all Scripture. It means to fight, standing upon a thing which is assaulted, and which the adversary desires to take away. It is to fight so as to defend the truth and retain it. The present tense of the infinitive denotes that the contending has no end. It goes on through the whole of life. The conflict will reach the point of extreme severity. From *agoni* come our words agony and anguish. Contending for the faith involves a painful conflict. Anguish will be experienced in contending for the one holy faith. The word used by Jude is *apaz,* meaning 'once for all' or not to be repeated. The truth is whole and complete. No new revelation is to be looked for. (Gleaned from commentary by Lawlor, Pres & Ref.)

The Genius of Isaac Ambrose

How to be filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy

Isaac Ambrose (1591-1664), was one of the Puritan pastors ejected from his living in 1662. During the time of Cromwell's ascendency he was ministering at Preston which is about 30 miles north of Liverpool. He was numbered among the Puritan pastors who resisted antinomian errors and emphasised both an inward and outward righteousness, the inward which is wrought by the Spirit and the outward which the righteousness of Christ imputed.

Ambrose was described by Calamy as a man of substantial worth, eminent piety, and exemplary life. The same author relates of Ambrose that it was his usual custom, once a year, for the space of about a month, to retire into a little hut in a wood, and, avoiding all human intercourse, to devote himself to contemplation.

Ambrose's written works were much prized. One of them bore the title, *War with Devils, and Ministration of Angels.* Another based on Hebrews 12:2, 'Let us fix our eyes on Jesus', bore the simple title *Looking unto Jesus.* Lloyd Sprinkle of Sprinkle Publications, P.O. Box 1094, Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801, U.S.A., is to be congratulated for reprinting this classic of 694 pages. It was last printed in 1885 in a fairly small though very clear and readable text. Members of PURITAN REFORMED (for address see back cover) will be watching out for the price offer on this gem.

The exposition has a special relevance at this time when there is a renewed interest in the experiental aspect of the gospel. In the last issue (*R.T.* 96) pastor Tony Ludlow, a Southern Baptist pastor wrote on the tyranny of experience seeking. From his own experience he explained how he had been delivered from the bondage of trying to get an experience based on a preconceived idea of what that experience is. In no way did he, and in no way do we, derogate the need for constant experience, that is the fulfilment experimentally of the first table of the law, the love of God Triune in our souls.

Is there a way to experience such love? Certainly there is no set formula to attain inexpressible and glorious joy (1 Pet 1:8). Such joy comes not by formula or by trying with the help of others to work oneself up to a state of fervent emotion. Isaac Ambrose spotted the simple fact that Peter is talking about *believing,* 'though you have not seen him, *you believe in him*'. And so he set out to explain in practical terms what that means.

First of all we need to appreciate the person and work of Christ. There are many books describing the person and work of the Holy Spirit. What substantial material do you have on your shelves on Christology? Ambrose's concern is practical and so he adopts a method which first describes Jesus and then traces out what it means for us personally to partake of him and enjoy him in his person and work. For instance there is the work of Christ before the incarnation. Then there is his birth, his ministry in four stages, his sufferings, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his reign, his intercession, and his coming again.

In each case Ambrose's method is to apply the truth personally. Take the death of Christ. The author traces out what it is for me to:

Consider Jesus in his death
Desire Jesus in his death
Hope in Jesus in his death
Believe in Jesus in his death
Love Jesus in his death
Joy in Jesus in his death
Call on Jesus in his death
Conform to Jesus in his death

The same procedure is used for the other phases; Jesus' resurrection, ascension, intercession, second coming.

Like William Gurnall's *Christian in Complete Armour* the quality of exposition is sustained throughout. The exhortation to be practical in our devotions is fervent and effective. Here is an example. Looking unto Jesus in his coming again.

'The wife of youth that wants her husband for some years, and expects that he should return from across the seas, is often on the shore. Her very heart loves the wind that should bring him home. Every ship revives

her hopes. She asks every passenger, "O! Saw you my husband? What is he doing? when will he come?" souls truly related to the Lord Jesus Christ should long no less! O! What desire should the Spirit and the Bride have, to hear when Christ shall say to the angels, "Make you ready for the journey, let us go down, and divide the skies, and bow the heavens; I will gather my prisoners of hope to me" (p. 669).

Tom Nettles

THE CAREY CONFERENCE FOR MINISTERS
LIVERPOOL JAN 5-7 1988
Theme The 1689 Confession as our inheritance
How Baptists have united or associated in the past by Dr Tom Nettles of Memphis, USA

Synopses of addresses given at The Carey Ministers' Conference 1987

Christian Unity in a Time of Stress
Donald Macleod
05MC87 76 mins

With John 17 as the basis it was shown that a fourfold prayer for the Church was founded on the success of Christ's mission. Christ prayed for his own glory and then for the glorification of his Church. Christ's fourfold prayer was practical, 1. That they might be kept, 2. That they might be sanctified, 3. That they might be united, and 4. That they might be glorified.

1, 2 and 4 are regarded as essential but not 3. Unity has been disregarded mostly because of the 20th C. Ecumenical Movement, which has sought to build unity on misguided principles of organisation which overlook the fact that the unity involved is spiritual. However we must face up to the fact that Christ places unity on the same level as the other essentials, almost as though a divided Church is no Church. Why don't we regard unity as seriously as does the Head of the Body? Why is it that we do not make it an essential, on a par with perseverence, like he did? The unity prayed for is on the basis of every believer being one with the Trinity. The unity is the unity of every single person within the body of Christ who is indwelt by the Trinity, irrespective of his tag: Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Episcopalian.

Based on the kind of unity that belongs to God as triune we can work out Christian unity at various levels, the strictly personal level of person with person, or at inter-church level. How united can churches be? The unity of the Trinity is an 'in and around' unity. The Father and the Son are one in essence, 'in each other', but also around, 'they do not get in each others way'. Each person of the Trinity is distinct in personality and work but completely united in essence and purpose.

According to the truth shared local churches should seek to exemplify this unity. What are Reformed Baptist churches doing to give expression to their own collective existence? Is there a nationwide coherent plan for church planting? Has not evangelism been the real casualty in all the fragmentation?

With regard to other groupings we have to learn from each other. We cannot cut ourselves off, for we have a responsibility to all professing Christians. To be keen to dismiss or unchurch other believers, churches or groupings, reveals a highly suspect mentality. Some groupings are powerful in missionary endeavour, some strong in the work of compassion, others robust in theological insights. In the Third World there is great evangelistic zeal, but often serious theological immaturity. We owe it to them to share our theological inheritance, while we have much to learn from them about devotion and zeal.

With regard to those who profess to be Christian but deny the Gospel, we ought to contend for the truth. It is more loving to contend and have controversy than to be silent.

John Blanchard

Biblical Standards in Evangelism
John Blanchard
02CM87 60 mins

John Blanchard used 2 Corinthians 2:12–4:18 upon which to establish six principles that should govern all our evangelistic activity and especially our preaching.

1. AUTHORITY Paul spoke of the Lord having opened a door for him (2:12) and of being 'very bold' (3:12). These speak of authority in *ministry* and *message* – and biblical evangelism has both. We must beware of thinking that God only worked in special events. There was no reason known to us why God should not do even greater things in the 'ordinary' life of the church.

2. INTEGRITY Paul referred to this at 2:17 and 4:2. We must beware of any imbalance in our preaching. Over-emphasis on man's responsibility could obscure God's sovereignty in salvation – *and vice-versa*! A biblical gospel is trinitarian. In Albert Barnes' words, 'Preaching should consist in a simple exhibition of the truth'.

3. HUMILITY Attention was drawn to 3:1, 3:5, 4:5 and 4:7. Paul made great claims for his office, but was not seeking self-aggrandisement. Pride remained one of the preacher's major occupational hazards – money, sex and discouragement being the others – and this was hardly surprising, as he was the constant focus of attention.

4. CLARITY Here the speaker opened up 3:12 and 4:2 ('setting forth the truth plainly'), with application. He boldly suggested that the AV should now be buried 'with full ecclesiastical honours'! He saw no justification in confining God to 17th century English. He urged the need for a primary appeal to the mind, rather than to the emotions or the will, and stressed the importance of using biblical language. Today's popular phrases such as 'making a decision for Christ', 'opening the heart to Christ', 'giving the heart to Christ' and 'choosing Christ', were all exposed as unbiblical.

5. SYMPATHY Men's eyes were blinded by 'the god of this age' (4.4) and whatever our hatred of sin we must preach to the sinner with love, compassion and unjudging sympathy.

6. URGENCY It was no part of our mandate to entertain sinners on their way to hell, or to get them to clap their hands when they should be wringing them. Instead, we should warn them of their desperate danger and their urgent need of God's salvation.

The Challenge of Pastoral Theology
Erroll Hulse
07MC87 69 mins

After showing that the image of the shepherd is the underlying paradigm for the pastoral office, the role of God as pastor was expounded, followed by an opening up of the text, Colossians 1:28, under three heads, 1. *We proclaim him,* there is the challenge of preaching which is the primary means of all counselling, 2. *Admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom,* there is the challenge to apply and counsel personally, and 3. *that we may present everyone perfect in Christ,* there is the challenge to meet the need of *every one* in the body of Christ.

Under 1. Just what do we attempt to accomplish in our preaching? In answer, Martin Bucer's classic book on pastoral theology was reviewed and updated. The status of the full-time preaching ministry was defended. Under 2, Jay Adams' great use of *noutheteo* was examined, modified and applied. Under 3, Derek Tidball's recent book (the most relevant to date, *Skilful*

Shepherds, 368 pp., £8.95, I.V.P.) was compared with the Puritan approach, reviewed and examined in five areas of practical application: the struggle for faith, forgiveness, suffering, the battle for unity (see cassette 05MC87), and the counselling of ministers themselves. The address concluded with a survey of contemporary expertise needed to counsel different cases of depression, drug addiction, marital upheaval, anorexia, *et al.*

Seth Joshua
Geoff Thomas
01MC87 69 mins

Seth Joshua was the greatest evangelist in Wales at the beginning of the century. As a youth in Gwent he was athletic and musical. Within a few weeks after his conversion in a steel mill he had given up that work to spend his life telling others what God had done for his soul. He went with his brother Frank to Neath, and there as a lad of twenty-one years of age he began street preaching, to such effect that a large and fascinating church was planted.

From there he was called by John Pugh, his lifelong mentor, to spearhead a pervasive evangelistic movement which would find its inspiration from the founders of Calvinistic Methodism in Wales in the eighteenth century, but which would plant churches in the heavily populated industrial south. Sites were bought in prominent parts of the biggest cities, tents and wooden tabernacles were erected and the gospel was preached with strong faith and fearlessness. Churches like Heath Evangelical Church and the Memorial Hall were built in Cardiff, while in Newport, Malpas Road Evangelical Church was erected.

Seth Joshua was the chief preacher and most important figure in the 1904-1905 revival.

At John Pugh's death in 1907 there were forty-eight churches established, but the leadership did not pass to Seth Joshua but a safe denominational man. The new note of 'consolidate and mark time' sounded in South Wales, and from that moment on the Foward Movement went into decline.

Soon Joshua went into itinerant evangelistic work for fifteen years, and then in 1920, at the death of his brother in Neath, he was called unanimously to become his successor and pastor of what was the biggest church in Wales, with 1,200 people each Sunday night and at times 800 people turned away. He lived for almost five years as the minister there, dying some months before Dr Lloyd-Jones came to another Forward Movement hall a few miles away, where he too saw the same enthusiastic zeal for the gospel that had witnessed Seth Joshua's declining years.

Mobilising the church for Evangelism
John Blanchard
04MC87 47 mins

John Blanchard's second message was an outright appeal to us to examine *all* our evangelistic efforts in terms of biblical criteria. He began by suggesting that there was little or nothing in the N.T. by way of detailed evangelistic instruction. Early Christians evangelised because the gospel had gripped their lives 'and their hearts were full of it'. It was the natural outcome of a spiritual income. Perhaps we have many church members with a solid grasp of doctrine, excellent moral standards and a good standing in society – but how many have a passion for souls?

After reviewing the biblical data on the words 'evangelist' and 'preaching', John turned to some illustrations from his own experience in team missions and sought to apply lessons to the ongoing work of the local church. He deplored our veneration of what he called 'the 11th and 12th Commandments – Thou shalt always do it like this, it has always been done this way; thou shalt never do it like this, it has never been done this way' – and suggested we should begin with 'a blank sheet of paper'. What were our resources in terms of premises, manpower, money, time? What were the *best* ways of utilising these? Were our Sunday services *really* the best way of reaching the lost? Were they ever intended to be? What would we feel if ten of our best couples stayed home on Sunday night, invited neighbours for tea, and spent the evening sharing the gospel with them? Would that not be more effective?

Perhaps there were times when the Sunday evening service should be scrapped, and replaced by a neighbourhood meal, followed by an informal presentation of the gospel around the tables. This may all sound too radical, but were we not guilty of following the traditions of men as if they were the Word of God? He then outlined a number of ways in which 'hospitality evangelism' could be effective in reaching the lost, and made a very strong plea for the imaginative, widespread, 'even prodigal' use of evangelistic literature, citing the distribution of Spurgeon's sermons, Hannah More's tract distribution and the origins of the Religious Tract Society as examples from the past. 'The church that spends thousands on a new organ and a hundred or so on evangelistic literature has surely got its vision and priorities distorted?'

At the end of the day, the great need was to recapture the genius of personal evangelism; the pastor's part was to major on the great gospel themes – 'If these will not move us, motivate us, mobilise the church, then nothing will and nothing can!'

Review

A Reader's Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament

Vol. 3 Isaiah-Malachi by T. A. Armstrong, D. L. Busby, and C. F. Carr.

Published by Zondervan in the Regency Reference Library series.

The diligent but distraught pastor is once again behind schedule. This time he is making his way through a passage from the prophets. Because he is diligent he is reading the Hebrew. He is distraught because it is taking him a very long time. He is tired. His arm is aching from the continuous turning of lexicon pages. Three quarters of an hour passes. One more verse has been read. What is the poor man to do? Abandon Hebrew? Unthinkable! Carry on struggling with the original of Jeremiah? The time factor is making that impossible!

Such a pastor needs the *Reader's Hebrew-English Lexicon.* In this work, rare words (those occurring fifty or fewer times), are listed by book, chapter and verse. Thus, if *Jeremiah 9* were being studied, one has only to open the *lexicon* at that text and all the unusual vocabulary is to hand. The translations are checked for context where necessary. An appendix lists the more frequent words. With each entry there are two sets of numbers, the first of which informs us of the frequency of the word (both in the specific book and in the Old Testament as a whole), while the second number is a reference to *Brown, Driver, and Briggs'* lexicon, where the matter can be explored further. Hence, the *Reader's Hebrew-English Lexicon* does have exegetical uses, although its main purpose is rapid reading of the text. Because a preacher will often deal with a whole chapter of Old Testament narrative in one sermon, speed reading is that much more important.

Vol. 1 in this series covers the Pentateuch, vol. 2 deals with the Former Prophets (Joshua-2 Kings), and now vol. 3 is on the market. Language helps for the Old Testament are not particularly thick on the ground, so do let us make use of those that there are.

Nick Gledhill

THE BOOK OF PRAISES

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In this issue we have reproduced specimen pages on the front and back inside covers. All the renderings have suitable tunes recommended and printed music is included for twenty-seven (as with Psalm 130 opposite and Psalm 110 (front inside cover) although there the words only are reproduced.

A cassette has been made of eleven of the Psalm tunes played on the piano in response to many requests. This is available for hire at 75p for sale at £1.95 post free.

Some have enquired about copyright and overhead projectors. These may be used for assessment with a view to congregational purchase but obviously permanent use would infringe copyright.

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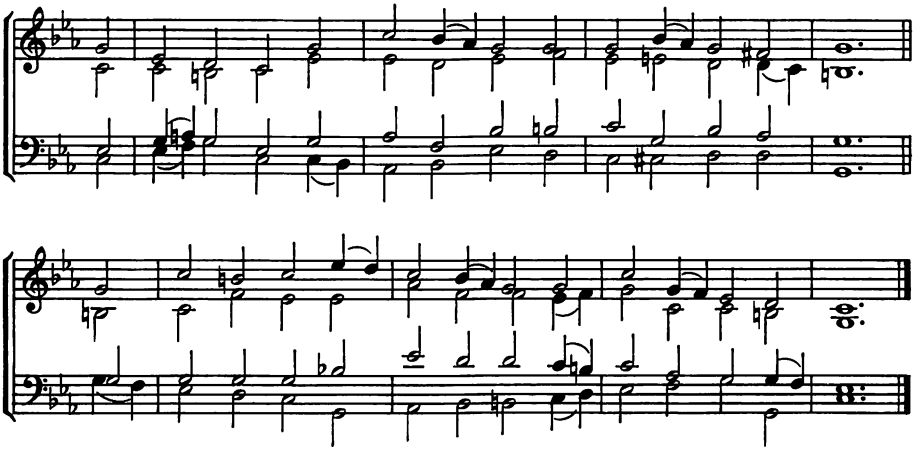
Psalm 130

BANGOR (C.M.) Welsh hymn tune (1734)

A penitential psalm

1 FROM deep despair to you I call!
LORD, hear me when I cry!
O turn your ear to hear my voice
Which pleads with you on high!

2 O LORD, if you record our sins,
Who ever could be spared?
But mercy may be found with you,
That you may then be feared.

3 Now for the LORD my spirit waits,
My hope is in his word;
More than the watchmen wait for dawn
My soul waits for the LORD.

4 O Israel, hope in God the LORD!
His grace is full and free,
And pays the price to ransom us
From all iniquity.

NUMBER 97 MAY-JUNE 1987

ISSN 0034-3048

Editor ERROLL HULSE
361 Aigburth Road, Liverpool L17 0BP.

Associate Editors JOHN DAVISON, Scotland
DAVID KINGDON, Leicester, U.K.
WAYNE MACK, U.S.A.
TOM NETTLES, U.S.A.
JIM VAN ZYL, South Africa

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Single copies one-sixth the above in each case which includes postage.

Gifts are welcomed and those who wish to support the Magazine should make out their cheques to "Reformation Today".

Photoset and printed by Stanley L. Hunt (Printers) Ltd. Rushden, Northamptonshire